

his prostration before the passing priest and wafer.* This occurred in the year of Iturbide's successful revolution against Spain and more successful subjugation to Rome. But the real gray of the dawn was the American war, twenty-three years after the proclamation of dependence as well as of independence. Before that event not an open Bible could have been seen in the whole realm, which then included California, Nevada, Colorado, up to, if not across, the line of the Pacific Railway; nor could a minister conduct worship other than after the form of the Roman Church.

That war carried the Bible and the Protestant Church into Mexico. The soldiers brought the Book in their knapsacks or pockets, and falling out by the way, through cowardice, capture, or sickness, they dropped this seed of the Gospel along these new paths. They could easily talk with the natives after a few weeks, and in their hours of sickness, sometimes unto death, they translated its tender words into the common tongue. Thus the thirsty peon tasted the first drop of the Water of Life. Then, too, the Bible Society sent its agents with the armies, who carried and scattered the Word wherever the troops marched. I have met with several since my return who engaged in this work under the shelter of our flag.

Besides the sowing of the seed in this form, was the more noticeable though not more valuable revelation of it in the shape of public worship. To that hour, no Mexican in his own land had seen any Christian worship, except the celebration of the mass and its attendant ceremonies. The gaudy array of the priests, the mumblings in an unknown tongue, the prostration before a carved image, the uplifting of the Bread and Body of God, the swinging of incense, and ringing of bells, and beating of breasts, and wailings of people, and mournful and triumphal music of the organ and choir—this was their only daily food. The extras were after the same sort: preaching that fostered the follies of superstition and

* See page 257.

fed the fires of persecution, and processions that made the materialized service more material.

It was a new sight, the standing of a gentleman in the garb of a gentleman, among soldiers and civilians, the reading of a hymn in their own language which all join in singing, the utterance of a prayer in the same language, in which all reverently bow and join, the reading of the Bible in their own tongue, and the deliverance of a discourse upon its passages; only this, and nothing more. They had never seen it after this fashion. A gentleman said to me, "The first time I ever saw Protestant service conducted was in the palace of the President, by the chaplain of General Scott."

The effect of this was heightened from its being performed by these foreign invaders and conquerors under their own flag. The inquiry shot from mind to mind and heart to heart of the on-gazing multitudes, what is the new mode of religion? The Spanish conqueror's form of worship was no greater novelty to the Aztec, than the American conqueror's was to the Mexican. And each was associated with the victory of the worshiper. "Had this religion," they were compelled to ask, "any thing to do with the sudden and complete overthrow of our armies? Is this anti-Roman faith so much greater than the Roman, that a dozen thousand men can carry the fortified and well-defended gorges of Cerro Gordo, march over the volcano passes, storm Chapultepec, and capture the city in less than half the time it took Cortez to subdue the land, and that against a people of our own European nationality, trained in every art and weapon of war with which we are conversant?"

What can the answer be, but that the cause of the conquest is Religion? And as the Montezuma and his men recognized sadly that their faith caused their overthrow, so the rulers of Mexico acknowledged that like slavery was the reason of their subjugation. So will France yet confess that it is her religion that made her sink before the German arms, and that only the highest faith can produce the highest race.

The revelation of this conviction appeared in a very few years after the American conquest. Our withdrawal from the land de-

Effectuer que les missionnaires ne croient pas que la religion est la cause de la conquête, mais que la conquête est la cause de la religion.

Comme de la cause de la conquête, la religion est la cause de la conquête.

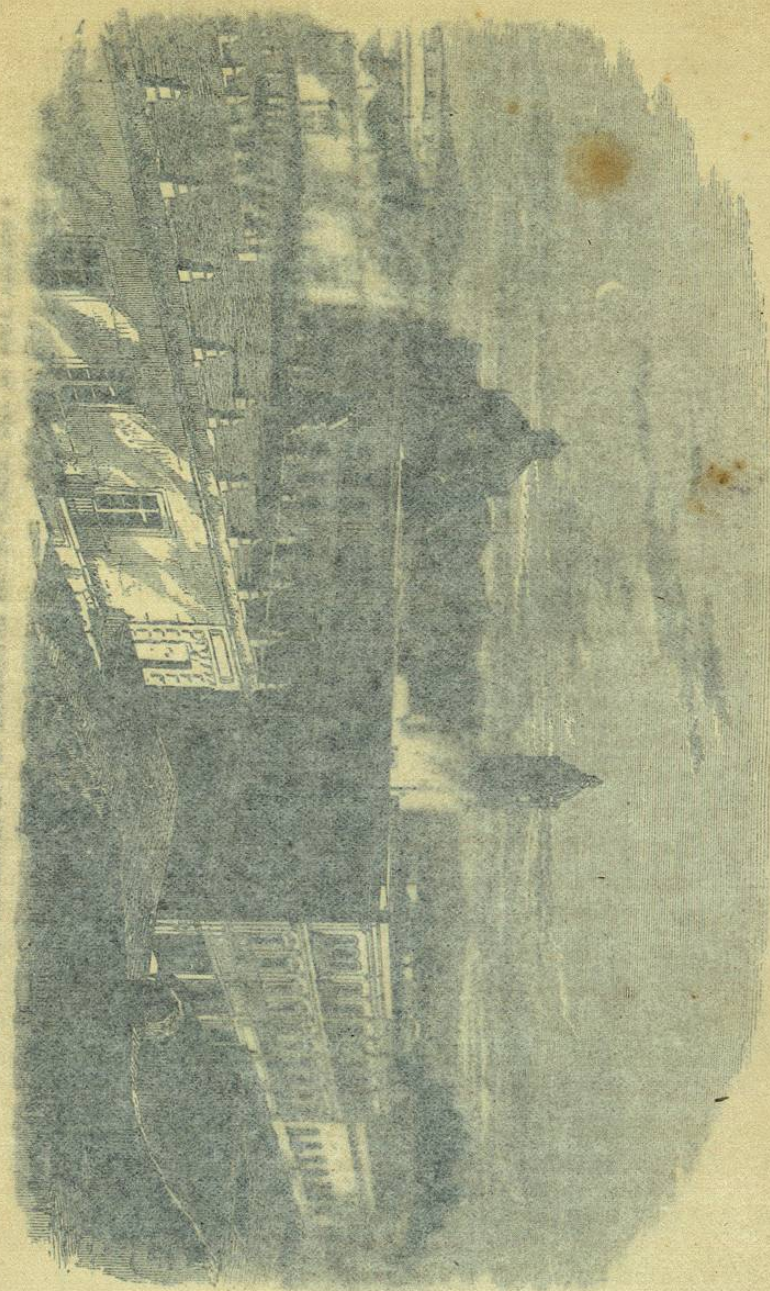
layed the revelation ; but it came. The first proclamation of independence from Rome was made by Comonfort in 1856, less than ten years after our coming and going. The Bible had been allowed to stay, and was steadily, though slowly and almost imperceptibly, leavening the lump. The street that went out from the western end of the plaza, parallel with the Street of San Francisco, was intercepted by the Convent of San Francisco. Comonfort saw that if he was to improve the city anywhere, it must be begun here. This splendid suite of buildings must be pierced. The archbishop resisted. "Touch that, and all is touched." He was right. He touched that, and all was touched. That fell, and all fell. The convent was cut in twain, and the street opened from the plaza to the gates. That was Mexico's first proclamation against Rome. On one side that street to-day you will see parks and dormitories of the convent ; on the other, the patio, chapel, and church, with several blocks of private dwellings, two chapels, used for a stable and a blacksmith shop, and the former library, now used as the chapel for American service, and blocks of residences.

That was the key-note of the revolution. On it went, sweeping out the friars and nuns, and cutting their superb estates in pieces. It was Protestantism in the State, blindly destroying, but not building up.*

Juarez followed Comonfort, and the war prevailed yet more. Confiscations of convent property became general. Schools were established without the control of the Church. The institutions of friarhood and sisterhood were abolished, and the claims of the Church, formerly loaned on the estates of the people, were declared of none effect. As this claim covered almost all property, it was a proclamation of universal financial emancipation. The disruption of Church and State was violently going forward. Had no religious influence come in to build up a better Church and State, that conflict would have resulted in the resubjugation of the State to

* See Madame Calderon De La Barca, for animating descriptions of these institutions at the height of their prosperity, hardly forty years ago. Her travels are still the best description of the people and their pastimes.

*¿Fue no dijo
V. que no ha
bía leído
ningun
viaje a México?*



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*Quel no Rio
Vou no ha
ba ludo
ningun
maje amejico?*

A DISTANT VIEW OF THE CHURCH OF THE EX-CONVENT OF SAN FRANCISCO, CITY OF MEXICO.



the Church, as has always been the case in France and Spain, and, but for the very active Protestantizing of Italy, would be the case there also. The Church saw this, and took advantage of our civil war to revive her fallen fortunes. Maximilian and Carlotta, two bigoted Papists, were imported and upheld by the arms of Napoleon and Eugénie, the last the most bigoted of Papists, in order to bring the State again at the feet of the Church. Not Napoleon, but Pius IX., is the instigator of that war. He who alone of temporal sovereigns recognized our slave power as a nation, sought to help that rebellion to succeed by getting up this rebellion in a neighboring state, and fostered that for the sake of making this triumphant. He succeeded. The French army subdued the republican, and from Vera Cruz to Paso del Norte freedom in religion and in government went down. Rome was mistress of Mexico.

Not until our war was ended did the Papal dominion cease. Juarez enters, Maximilian is captured, and justly and wisely shot, and Mexico is delivered from Rome, as she had been nearly half a century before from Spain. Her progress from that hour has been steady and rapid. But this progress has been because of the increase of the leavening power of the Bible and the Church. This has a story of its own.

Papers lie before me, prepared by a Mexican Protestant at the request of Rev. Dr. Riley, which give the story of the rise of the true Church. From this unprinted pamphlet I am permitted to make up this narrative.

It declares that Mexico was groaning under the hard yoke of the Roman clergy; that after a war of many years, and after long and cruel sufferings, the republican government was established, and freedom of religion. "How much blood was shed," it plaintively cries, "in settling these laws! How many families are still weeping for their fathers, how many mothers for their children, slain in the wars of the Reformation!"

After the first election of Don Benito Juarez to the Presidency, and before the last civil war, that is between 1858 and 1863, some clergymen, called Constitutionalists, established a new worship like

*Como usurpa
dor, no por su
idea religiosa*

Riley-

that which is to-day performed by the anti-Romanists. To these ministers the President gave the use of two of the confiscated churches, Mercy and the Most Holy Trinity.

When the French came in, the monarchical government, at the instigation of the priests, seized one of these ministers, and having scraped his hands, and his clerical tonsure on the top of his head, in order to degrade him of his priestly character, they led him out to execution. When about to be shot, seeing the rifles leveled at his breast, he cried out, just as they fired, "Viva Jesus! Viva Mexico!" (Long live Jesus! Long live Mexico!)

This vivid expression of devotion to the Lord Christ and his country is the inspiration of the whole movement. The scattering of the Bible resulted in the conversion of Rev. Francis Aguilar. After the expulsion of the French in 1867, he opened a hall for public worship in San Jose de Real, in the old convent of the Profesa. He was the first preacher of the true faith. His meetings were well attended. He also translated a book entitled "Man and the Bible," which had a large circulation. In a few months he became sick unto death, and in the last hour, taking his Bible, pressing it tenderly to his bosom, he said, "I find in this peace and happiness," and fell asleep in Jesus. The second dying witness was as serene and triumphant as the first. "Jesus," "the Bible," were their several words of victory. Francisco Aguilar circulated the Scriptures with great zeal, and helped greatly to extend and establish the true faith.

On his death, his church, being without a pastor, sent a committee to the United States to seek aid from the Protestant Episcopal Church. This Church, through its bishop in New Orleans, gave them pecuniary help, but could not aid them farther. Rev. H. C. Riley, a native of Chili, born of English parents, but conversant with the language from his birth, was preaching at that time to a Spanish congregation in the city of New York. He listened to the cry, gave up his congregation, and in the spring of 1871 started for the country. The American and Foreign Christian Union supplied means for the furtherance of the cause, and his own purse, and his

father's, with the gifts of William E. Dodge and others, gave him the necessary sinews for the war upon which he was entering.

That war quickly broke out. Almost as soon as he had arrived and taken quarters at the Hotel Iturbide, there was a conspiracy formed for his murder in that very hotel. He saw the band meeting to plot against his life. He escaped to safer and less noticeable quarters. He fought fire with fire, bringing out pamphlet after pamphlet, the first of which was called "The True Liberty." He wrote and arranged many of the hymns and tunes that are still in use. He also prepared a book of worship, with Scripture readings and prayers, after the form of the Episcopalians.

The excitement grew, and the priests thundered against the new worship which had so speedily assumed form under the experience and energy of the new apostle. An American Spaniard, versed in their whole style of procedure, versed equally in the opposite and better style, with singing and Bible reading, and praying and preaching, and publishing, was making himself felt and feared throughout the city and surroundings.

This uproar drew attention of politicians and priests to the new man and his work. His friends at home seconded his zeal. Private persons gave largely for the purchase of two church edifices, that of San Francisco, and that of San Jose de Gracia. The latter was chiefly, if not solely, the gift of his own father. Rev. Dr. Butler, secretary of the Society, traversed our country, eloquently pleading for the new enterprise, and aiding its extension by liberal and especial gifts of many gentlemen. The Chapel of San Francisco and the Church of San Jose de Gracia were fitted up and occupied by large congregations. The latter is a comely church within, though possessed of but few external attractions. Among the worshipers at the latter place were President Juarez and his family.

Meantime the pamphlet and pulpit war went on. But Dr. Riley was not left alone on the field. Out of the eater came forth meat. The most popular preacher in the cathedral and the Church of San Francisco, over whose eloquence thousands had hung entranced, who was a violent persecutor of the rising faith, a Domin-

ican friar, Manuel Aguas, read the pamphlets, was convinced, withdrew from his pulpit and from the mass. He read the Bible,

distrusted his former teachings, visited the "Church of Jesus," as the new church called itself, and at last confessed unto salvation.

It made a great stir. He became very bold in his preaching, and aggravated his former associates by his ability and enthusiasm and popularity. The archbishop excommunicated him in the cathedral in the presence of an immense crowd. But the deposed priest did not fear the anathemas. He stood in the audience, and even sought debate while the terrible curses



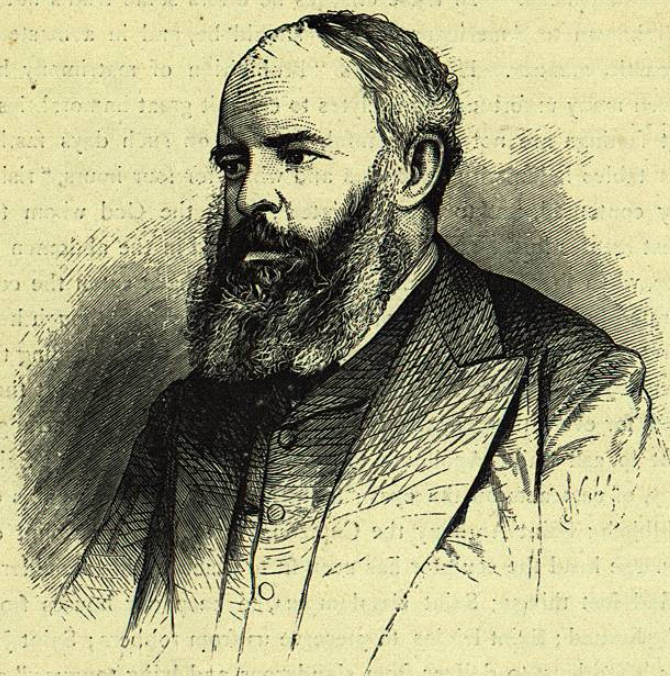
CHURCH OF SAN JOSE DE GRACIA.

were being solemnly recited—anathemas that a few years before would have been instantly attended with burnings on the plaza of his own convent, and in which also, a few years before, had it been another of his brethren who was being thus accursed, he would himself have taken part joyfully in the burning. He waxed bolder, and wrote to the archbishop a powerful paper, in reply to his excommunication, showing up the follies and falsehoods of the Romish Church.

It is worthy of being scattered over our own land. It professes to give a conversation between Paul and the archbishop. The former visits the cathedral, witnesses the performances, condemns the heathen idolatries, and learns, to his surprise, that he is finding fault with what some assert to be the most ancient Christian ordinances. He inquires farther, and finds no Bible permitted to be read, marriage of the clergy forbidden, idolatry observed in the worship of

the mass, the bread of sacrament alone being distributed to the people, the wine being denied because, as Aguas says, one council affirms, "the blood of the Lord would be squandered by adhering to the mustache." In these charges he utters some truths not so well known to Americans as they should be, and in a masterly, sarcastic manner. He declares "Prohibition of matrimony has driven many unfortunate proselytes to commit great immoralities;" that fastings are not very painful, the rich on such days fasting over tables laden with delicacies and wines for four hours, "rising very contented, not to say inebriated;" that the God whom the priest creates in the mass "has been deposited in the abdomen of mice, when these mischievous little creatures have eaten the consecrated host, a misfortune which has often happened, though kept secret from the faithful." He charges the priests with stealing the alms deposited to pray souls out of purgatory, and mocks at their saints for every thing, declaring that "it is a very fortunate arrangement to ask Saint Apollonia to cure us of the toothache; Saint Lucy, of cataracts on the eyes; Saint Vincent Ferrer, of pains of childbirth; Saint Anthony the Capizon, 'so called on account of the large head the sculptor has seen fit to place on his shoulders,' to find lost things; Saint Caralampus, to keep our houses from being burned; Saint Dinias, to preserve us from robbers; Saint Judeus Thaddeus, to deliver from slanderous and lying tongues," although he sarcastically adds, "the nuns have multiplied the prayers to this saint in vain, since Padre Aguas will not leave Mexico, nor cease invading the Holy Cathedral." He notes what was mentioned as being absent from the catechism sold at Leon, the erasing of the Second Commandment. He also sarcastically refers to the priest's family as "nephews who are the legitimate sons of their uncles," and presses home on the archbishop not only these unwelcome facts, but the severest denunciation of the apostle for permitting and approving them. Pitifully he concludes with the story of her cruelty, and describes her great inquisitor, Dominic de Guzman, as surpassing all others in cruelty, and yet canonized and worshiped by the Church. Nowhere in modern history has there been

a severer, sharper, more sarcastic, and more effectual rebuke to the pretensions and career of Papacy than in this powerful pamphlet. Can not our tract societies give it to our people?



MANUEL AGUAS.

The separation was complete. The most popular of her preachers, confessor to the canons of the cathedral, doctor and teacher of divinity, giving medical advice to multitudes of the poor of the city, was so cast out by the greater excommunication, which was nailed on the doors of the churches and announced in the papers, that all his friends forsook him, and, had it not been for the police, the boys would have stoned him in the streets.

He preached to large houses in the two chapels, and superintended the work after Dr. Riley's departure. Sickness seized him, some think poison, and he died in the spring of 1872, when only about fifty years of age. His last sermon was on the text, "Blessed

are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great shall be your reward in heaven." He was so ill he could scarcely finish his sermon. He was taken from the pulpit. Soon he was dying. A friend asked him, in this solemn moment, "Do you now love Jesus?" "Much, very much," was the answer.

As memory commenced to fail, so that he was forgetting his nearest friends, one of them stooped over the dying man, and in his ear asked the question, "Do you remember the blood of Christ?" He had not forgotten that. He exclaimed, "The most precious blood of Jesus!" On breathing his last, a smile rested on his countenance, which abode still upon it when it lay in state in the Chapel of St. Francis. A great multitude attended his funeral, among whom were many Romanists. His hearse had properly upon it the emblem of an open Bible. By that he had conquered.

There is no doubt that Manuel Aguas is, so far, the chief fruit of the Mexican Reformation. Whether he would have proved the Luther, can not be known. Probably its Luther must come from abroad, or from the youth now growing up in the faith.* More probably it will have, as it will need, no Luther.

The congregations were not confined to the two chapels of the "Church of Jesus," or to any organization. Laymen and clerics began to talk where opportunity offered. I attended one such meeting, held by R. Ponce de Leon, near the Tulu gate. It was a charming morning when we walked through dust and degradation to the preaching place. It was in a quadrangle occupied by a gentleman who acted as an interpreter to the Indians.† He was a grave man of sixty. He led me into his library, and showed me books in different languages still in use. The Indians had come to the gate to do their trading. A few, in their blankets and wretchedness, sat on the clean floor of the little room, while the interpreter and a few of his sort occupied chairs. Señor Ponce

* See Appendix B.

† See Appendix C.